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THE ROLE OF CONGRESS

by Edna Lonigan

The first session of the 81st Congress is slowly dragging to its end. President Truman denounced the "do nothing" 80th Congress in what was perhaps the bitterest verbal attack ever made by an American President against the legislative process. Whether the President really likes the 81st Congress better is not our concern here. The one important question for the citizen in regard to Congress is: What is the role of this representative organ in the fight to save the Republic?

Our political textbooks (following Montesquieu) have given us a picture of government as divided into three parts, legislative, executive, and judicial. Popular usage tends more and more to refer to the executive power alone as "government".

Actually popular usage here is the more accurate. The executive power is profoundly different from the legislative power. The elected "representatives" of the people speak for the people in opposition to appointed officials responsible primarily to the Executive. It is therefore the duty of Congress to restrain the "government" to "do nothing" that will improperly increase its power at public expense.

Montesquieu emphasized the English separation of legislative and executive powers because he clearly saw that this separation was necessary for freedom. If the French would deprive their absolute monarchy of the power to make its own laws, they could also enjoy the liberty for which the English so resolutely fought. The men who wrote our Constitution fully realized the importance of "balanced powers".

Today that realization greatly needs to be revived. Our legislative agencies are still visibly separate from the executive arm, but under the surface the separation of powers is disappearing. The Executive is regaining the power to make its own law, and to control the courts, although the structure outwardly appears unchanged.

There is no need for Congress if its function is merely to write "laws" conveying to the President in pleasing language the power to do what he likes. Clark Clifford or any other clever appointee could do that. The role of Congress is to do what the White House naturally resents: to lay down <u>restraints</u> on the Executive, to define the channels through which the executive power is to flow.

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Since 1935, as a result of "must legislation", lump-sum appropriations, manufactured "emergencies", and foreign entanglements, the President has been arrogating to himself the power to decide the restraints which he will heed, and to define the channels through which he will dispose of the vast resources at his command.

II

We tend to forget that executive power is physical and substantial. It is the power of the military leader or commander in chief. All the elaborate developments of the executive arm partake of the nature of the army. Whether a government agent is arresting dope peddlers, or promising Federal subsidies to all and sundry, he is not acting in his own person, but exercising an authority derived from the ability of the "government" back of him to seize persons and property by force.

Legislative power, on the other hand, is not physical. It is legal and abstract. Executive power can be wielded by a strong and ruthless individual and his henchmen. But legislative power requires the voluntary support of a sophisticated and self-disciplined people.

Every city-state and nation, as it grew strong, was forced to realize that the chief could use the physical power at his command against unarmed citizens who displeased him. The history of Parliaments is essentially the story of how the people, after their chief had created an army, learned how to impose restraints on the force under his control.

The great forward step was made when the English-speaking people turned from the council or mass meeting to a small body of "representatives", to keep watch over the chief and his personal aides. These "representatives" of the people stumbled on the all-important factor, in protecting the citizens, when they learned that the ruler would be very reasonable if he needed money, and only if he needed money. The political problem of the Republic today is still as simple as that. It is to insure that the ruler is curtailed for money.

We call the parliamentary protection of our liberties "the Power of the Purse". It used to be called, more accurately, "the separation of the Purse from the Sword". Our forefathers knew, what we forget, that the chief of state always possesses the Sword. The people can control the Sword only if they keep control of the Purse, which is the power to supply the ruler's armies, or, in our more refined age, to vote the salaries of the bureaucracy.

So it should be realized that Congress is not really so much a part of "government" as a defense against government. It is a wall which the people have built to insure that the chief cannot send his armies to

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punish their leaders, or to take their property, except as they decree. When the colonists said, "No taxation without representation" they knew the score. They meant that the head of the state should not collect a penny in taxes unless their own elected agents were in full control, with power to decide where and how all taxes should be spent.

III

The Twentieth Century has witnessed a world-wide abdication by the people of their dearly bought right to control the Sword. The people have everywhere surrendered to the personal government of the commander in chief. They have forgotten that any party which accepts personal government thereby undermines the Congressional wall protecting the unarmed people against the government's arbitrary will. But no modern dictator has been rash enough openly to abolish the Legislature.

Mussolini said: "I will not take from the people their legislative toy." Hitler made the Reichstag what was well called "the world's most expensive male singing society". Stalin appears at the pageants that mark the meeting of the Soviet Congress. But in all these cases the leaders themselves usurped the Power of the Purse.

Similarly, our different programs for Big Spending, since 1933, have been variants of one central plan -- to give the President free money. In WPA, PWA, Lend Lease, ECA, MAP and all the rest of the always "emergency" legislation, Congress was never allowed to say just how the money should be spent, or to define the exact powers and duties of the spending agencies. That discretion is all the President needs. For if the law is not precise, Congress will never know whether or not the President obeys the law. Generalities are not law, no matter how legally they may be dressed up in sections and articles. Keeping the traditional form of law is merely part of the deceptive process. It is through vague and general language, cast in legal form, that the Executive has regained the power to decide what laws it will observe.

When appropriations grow large enough, Congress has no hope of knowing what is really done with the money. And nowadays Congress is confronted by the Executive with a budget deliberately made so huge and complex that it cannot be analyzed. Our representatives have been driven to the expedient of suggesting that Congress tell the Executive to make its own cut of 5 or 10 per cent of the amounts appropriated. But this, as Senator Styles Bridges has virtually admitted, is open abdication by Congress of the Power of the Purse.

While Congress was deliberately immobilized by the pressure of real or fake emergencies, the Executive has been using the people's money to

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deluge their representatives with vials of ridicule. When ridicule was not enough, the factions which we call the party in power have turned to "purging" those Members of Congress who have fought valiantly to keep the Purse separate from the Sword.

IV

It is tragic to hear Americans speak of contests between the President and Congress as though we were mere bystanders at a prize fight. The Congress has no army, no bureaucracy, no courts, no jails, no propaganda arm. Its one real power, the power to withhold money from the bureaucracy, has meaning only to the extent that people support the representatives who guard the Purse.

When President Truman denounced the 80th Congress as a "do nothing" Congress, he was really calling it a great Congress, one which held the line against Executive aggression. What an opportunity the Republicans missed! How richly their last candidate deserved defeat!

When President Roosevelt tried to purge Senator George he was logical. When President Truman recently attacked Senator Byrd, he was consistent. These Executives merely sought to punish independent thinking in their own party, as everyone who seeks power must do. It is encouraging that among Democrats, rather than among Republicans, the plain people have risen to defend their defenders, as the colonists did.

The world-wide political crisis is in every country a struggle between the unarmed citizens and the chief, with his personal following, who directs the armed forces. It makes no real difference whether the head man is from the Left or from the Right, whether he is called a leader or a dictator or a president. In each case he and his personal aides have the all-essential physical power, and, if they can shake off the restraining influence of the people's representatives, they have power as absolute as that of Louis XIV. In almost every country, except the United States, this battle for the people is now definitely lost.

The people depend for their liberty on the strength with which Congress can impose restraints on their spending. Otherwise the Sword and the Purse are reunited in the hands of the ruler and his following. Then all the gains the unarmed citizenry have made in 300 years will be lost. Our Congress is the last free Parliament. It contains wise and valiant men who have been fighting for fifteen years to hold the line, in the hope that the people will realize in time what is at stake.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events Vol. VI, No. 38

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By Frank C. Hanighen September 21, 1949

STEEL STRIKE: The strike situation has immensely complicated Mr. Truman's life and challenged what initially appeared to be a bold, independent White House solution for the Labor problem. Several months ago, we reported (July 20) that the President had "won a political victory . . . when the steel companies agreed, albeit with reservations, to his proposal for a 60-day 'cooling-off' period, which has temporarily postponed the scheduled steel strike. Thus he finessed the Taft-Hartley Act, made big business yield, and staved off something which might have deepened the recession. He will make the most of it in his political propaganda." He did -- and one of the most recent expressions of rejoicing from the Administration was to the effect that "the recession is over". With a steel strike looming, that seems like a premature boast. At any rate, Truman today finds his objectives the same as they were early in July, namely: (1) to finesse Taft-Hartley, (2) make big business bow and (3) stave off more recession. It is a big bill. Can he meet it again? It is recalled that there was a Labor emergency in the spring of 1946; over the rail strike. At that time Mr. Truman went to Capitol Hill for legislation. This week, Administration leader Sam Rayburn urged all House Members, on vacation, to return. Then the President called off a projected trip to Missouri. The atmosphere is charged with apprehension.

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POUND DEVALUATION: In the wake of the announced devaluation of the pound, we heard one highly interesting report from a financial observer, who enjoys excellent sources of information on monetary developments. This observer says that during the American-British-Canadian meeting of week before last, the United States promised Britain support of the pound at the new $2.80 rate. Such a course would mean that the U.S. Treasury would finance purchase of pounds if the new rate appeared to be slipping. If our financial friend is correct in his information, the U.S. Treasury may have to spend a good deal of money to keep the $2.80 rate pegged. According to the New York Times of September 20, "Bankers here [New York] insisted that confidence in the pound, even at its devalued rate is still lacking and that the currency would continue susceptible to pressure from those who have pound credits and who wish to unload them even at a discount under the present rate." It may be well to watch the actions of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York to see if such support will be forthcoming.

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TAFT CAMPAIGN: The Taft campaign in Ohio is doing well so far. The Senator spends three or four days of each week making speeches to gatherings large and small in his state, working his way south from Lake Erie. One fact, receiving much comment from the local papers but inadequately stressed by out-of-state correspondents covering the campaign, is that the Taft appearances draw about twice as many people as they did in the Presidential nomination campaign in 1948. The widely-announced plans of the national labor union officials to come into Ohio and "get Taft" have proved a boomerang; many people have reacted strongly in favor of the Senator. This reaction springs in part from the natural indignation of local citizens against "political carpetbaggers". Taft managers, however, warn that the campaign in Ohio faces the biggest test: how strongly will labor union members rally to the anti-Taft drive of

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their national leaders when the "big money" from union treasuries is thrown into the fight? As yet, the union leaders have been freer with epithets than with hard cash.

No realistic observer can assess the progress of the Taft campaign without taking into consideration the situation in the Democratic Party in Ohio. Governor Lausche has indicated that he will not run for Senator. This was a blow to the national Democratic plans, for Lausche has a large following. Now, the White House is putting strong pressure on the Ohio machine to nominate Mr. Murray Lincoln, Ohio farm leader, as Taft's opponent. Some Taft partisans concede that, if Lincoln ran, he would have quite an appeal among rural sections of the state, and would command support of the CIO. However, Lincoln is a registered Republican and it seems difficult to believe that the regular Democratic politicos can be brought to favor him. Already there are rumbles of revolt in Democratic circles; and two Democratic leaders, Mayor Burke of Cleveland, and State Auditor Joseph T. Ferguson, have loomed as possible candidates in the Democratic primary. Lincoln, it should be noted, has not yet accepted the honor (although he has been considering it). All in all, the situation in the Democratic Party in Ohio is cause for reassurance among the Taft supporters.

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ANTI-TRUST SUITS: We know very little about the legal merits of the case of the Department of Justice against the DuPonts and U.S. Rubber, or the more recent one brought against the A & P stores. The anti-trust division of the Department may well have sound briefs and the courts may justly decide for the "Government". The anti-trust laws, in our opinion, have undoubtedly contributed greatly to our productive, competitive system. Looking at the stagnation of monopoly-ridden Britain, we give thanks for the Sherman Act. However, the Attorney General's announcements of the suits were marked by statements that inspired wonder. In the case of DuPont, he said that the suit was directed to the dissolution "of the largest concentration of industrial power in the United States", and this philosophy of prosecuting "bigness" in industry became more apparent in the A & P indictment.

Now it is true that much of the animus behind anti-trust legislation in the early days was that of small business men fearful of "bigness" in industry and its effects on them. However, this sentiment faded in recent decades, and in the Thirties such a torchbearer of the anti-monopoly crusade as Thurman Arnold emphasized that he was not fighting "bigness" but simply "conspiracy in restraint of trade". In his book, The Bottlenecks of Business (1940), Arnold extensively stated this philosophy. Of course, Arnold incurred much disfavor with the New Deal "high brass" because he insisted on prosecuting a labor union for conspiracy in restraint of trade. Interviewers in those days found Mr. Arnold rasping at New Dealers, such as Leon Henderson. Arnold stressed that he wanted only to "police" industry; Henderson and others wanted to concentrate industry and have the government take it over.

It is interesting to note that, in The Bottlenecks of Business, Arnold showed himself very sensitive to criticisms that anti-trust legislation interfered with "efficiency" in business. In a chapter entitled "Test is Efficiency and Service", Mr. Arnold said: "Competition has been identified with small units. The head of the Anti-trust Division has been referred to by the man on the street as a "trust buster'. Thus he has been made to appear as standing in the way of efficiency of mass production in a machine age. This emphasis on the anti-trust laws as a method of making little businesses out of big businesses regardless of the efficiency of distribution has been made more pointed by books that have been written on the supposed evils of bigness in itself. . . . The confusion caused by the notion that the anti-trust laws are an attack on size in itself has been one of the principal handicaps to public support of anti-trust enforcement. . . . It is important, therefore, to emphasize that the fundamental objective of the anti-trust laws is

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not to destroy the efficiency of mass production or distribution. Our idea of a free market does not contemplate an inefficient market. It is not size in itself that we want to destroy, but the use of organized power to restrain trade unreasonably, without justification in terms of greater distribution of goods."

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GERMAN NATIONALISM: Our feelings have been smoldering for some time on this much-publicized matter of alleged "nationalism" in Germany. Of course, the low level of news reporting from Germany, and the lack of any useful German background experience by most of the correspondents has contributed to the phony scare of "nationalism". One would imagine that any reasoning biped would note the fact that the new German State and all the principal parties are the most unqualified internationalists in Europe. In no country has the support for a United States of Europe been so unanimous among all sections of the public as in Germany, and the new German State has embodied this philosophy in its new constitution. Yet this fact receives no recognition in an American press which shrieks about German "nationalism".

The editorial writers of the Socialist New Leader (New York) joined this nonsensical chorus and received a well-merited rebuke from one of their fellow editors, David J. Dallin, who has been writing some highly interesting articles for the Leader from Europe. Dallin, in the issue of September 3, said: "The picture [of German nationalism] is false and so are all conclusions derived from it. . . . I know how the version emerged about the sudden outbreak of militant nationalism in Germany. In the course of his election campaign, Kurt Schumacher [Socialist leader] came out with the demand that an end be put to the foreign occupation. Some offices of the Occupation Forces were displeased; others became excited. Newspaper correspondents hastily announced to the world that 'German nationalism' was re-born; the New Leader editorial went a step further and termed it 'chauvinism'. Thus Schumacher was growing into a sort of new Hitler.

"We must expect real understanding of world affairs from every American. The occupation of Germany is in its fifth year; much of what appeared inevitable, but temporary in 1945, has become permanent. The Soviet occupation has become an elaborate system of terrorism, with regimentation of the press, deliberate arrests on a grand scale, and slave labor. The British occupation means continuing 'dismantling' which has become absurd. In the American zone, where thousands of houses lay in ruins, a great number of fine villas and apartments are occupied by young American officers with their families and servants. In the office buildings of the Military Government I myself saw inscriptions like this, on toilet doors: 'Not for German women.' The American occupation is, of course, easier to bear than the Russian. Is it not natural, however, that in its fifth year any occupation must provoke resentment and that every German dreams of its abolition? If this is 'nationalism', can there be anything but nationalist sentiment among Germans today? How would an American feel and act under similar circumstances?"

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WEIR: Mr. Ernest T. Weir, Chairman of the National Steel Corporation, has issued a very interesting brochure embodying his observations during a recent two-month journey in Western Europe. One passage in particular seems helpful to reproduce. For too many Americans believe that all people in Western Europe are afflicted with a "gimme" complex and ignore the necessities of our own domestic situation. Mr. Weir reports: "In every country that I visited, informed and thoughtful persons with whom I talked did not hesitate to say that the worst catastrophe that could happen to the world would be a serious depression in the United States. They realize that an important contributing factor to depression in the United States would be the renewal of deficit financing by our government. Rather than have this happen, they would prefer to see aid to their own countries scaled down."

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Book Events

Soviet Civil Law: Private Rights and Their Background under the Soviet Regime; a comparative survey and translation by Vladimir Gsovski; foreword by Hessel E. Yntema. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan. 2 vols. $18.00. Reviewed by J. M. Lalley.

This work is the latest in the Michigan series of legal studies, and was undertaken at the prompting of legal advisers of the Department of Commerce, which lacked funds of its own for such a purpose. Thus it fills a want long felt by diplomats, military officers, business representatives and others who have direct dealings with Russian officials; but it is also of great interest to the student of affairs for the light it throws upon the relationships of law, power and personal rights under a modern Police State. On this score, as doubtless also on the score of technical information, it is vastly to be preferred to the treatise published here last year by Comrade Vyshinsky and to Professor Towster's study of the Soviet political constitution; for unlike those works it shows how the Russian State, under the exigencies and expedients of power, has been evolving toward a form more closely resembling that of Nazi Germany than the Society envisaged by the pre-revolutionary Marxist prophets.

In the pure Marxist theory, law is merely the rationalized will of the dominant economic class, and its function is to perpetuate the power of that class. But since the proletarian revolution is to be followed by an abolition of property and private interest, this should automatically end the division of Society into classes and put a period to the class war. The State and its legal institutions should then become needless and meaningless and should accordingly, in the famous phrase of Friedrich Engels, "wither away". In short, the teleological fulfillment of the revolution and the classless Society should be a state of beneficent anarchy. It was probably in this faith that the victorious Bolsheviks of 1917-18 abolished at one stroke the whole Imperial Russian administrative edifice, including its legal codes and courts. They strove for a time to govern wholly by revolutionary decrees; but the impossibility of issuing decrees fast enough to cover all contingencies created a formidable problem of administration. The judges, most of them untrained, were forbidden to decide any cases on the basis of pre-revolutionary laws or of decisions by Czarist courts. In the absence of a decree explicitly or implicitly covering the case in question they were to be guided by the "Socialist concept of law" and by "revolutionary conscience", which in practice meant extending the revolution and the power of the Communist Party into new areas of life. A change came, however, with the New Economic Policy of 1922. A settled system of law and procedure and a predictable attitude on the part of judges were found necessary to the orderly movement of trade. The courts were ordered to follow legislative enactments and local ordinances, in other words to suspend the "revolutionary conscience".

Many of the recent alterations in the Soviet laws, especially those relating to marriage and the family, have brought them nearer to the patterns of bourgeois Society; other changes, such as those relating to titles, decorations and uniforms, have tended to re-establish the old hierarchical structure. But throughout, as Dr. Gsovski observes, the main purpose has been unchanged. This purpose is to preserve and strengthen the monopoly of the Communist Party control of the party over all phases of social and economic life. A codified law is necessary to the everyday work of administration; but the party and the rulers remain above the law and independent of it, as does their principal instrument of coercion, the terrorist Cheka, which, with each successive modification of its title, has increased its powers and extended the scope of its operations.

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European Supplement *to* Human Events Vol. VI, No. 38

By Bertrand de Jouvenel September 21, 1949

EUROPE BACK TO NORMAL: Some 23 years ago I got my first big assignment: I was to report on the revival of the war spirit in Bavaria, with special attention to the activities of a certain Hitler. I spent a quite idyllic month in the hills covered with pines and strewn with lakes. I fell quite in love with the fat kindly *hausfrauen* and their smiling *Grüssgott*, with the carefree sunburned youths swinging along the roads, and their romantic *lieder*. I returned with a bucolic description of a peaceful country, absorbed in simple, innocent pursuits, and I gave an account, which I deemed humorous, of my hunting for trouble, and finding it tucked away in quite unimportant corners, unnoticed and out of tune.

My editor, Gustave Téry, a Johnsonian type, then gave me a great lesson in journalism: "The world", he said, "is made up of an immense majority of quiet people going about their harmless business: they are not news. But somewhere, somebody is working up excitement: he is your meat. This little spot of trouble is news: there History is on the march. Look for it: that is your assignment."

Now for many years we haven't had to look for the little spots of trouble: trouble was everywhere; every single life was twisted or uprooted by a great hurricane. "The news" ceased to be a collection of out-of-the-way happenings, to be idly perused as things foreign to the reader. The path of History ran right through every home; "the news" was, alas, of ourselves.

At long last the great winds have abated. The individual's attention is diverted back to his own narrow circuit upon which "events" noticed by the press do not impinge; or so he feels. This is peace, this is normalcy. And this is due to American assistance and protection. Europe has been rescued from the Valley of the Shadow of Death: every American, I feel, should realize that, thanks to him, two Europeans have been nursed back to health from a nervous breakdown.

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THE REFORM OF EUROPE: To such a magnificent achievement there must, in the nature of things, be a counterpart. European life is propped up by outside help. It returns to normalcy by abnormal means; as people worry less they also forget to worry about the extraordinary conditions upon which their routine rests. It is generally understood that Europe has to be reformed, but in every single instance the entrenched interests or prejudices prove too strong against the reasoned conviction that reform is necessary. There is no sense of urgency: "1952 and all that" are seen through a haze. It is characteristic that while M. Queuille urges journalists to write about it, the great majority of publishers want "something closer to people's preoccupations".

That external disequilibrium should remain a somewhat academic problem for the bulk of the people is readily understandable. Exchange control tends to sever the internal scene from external pressures: these latter are left to be dealt with by the Administration's financial and diplomatic experts, while internal practices are persisted in or developed in ignorance of their external costs. It was generally felt in the Council of Europe at Strasbourg (an excellent gathering) that a major political problem was to bring home to public opinion at large the relation between internal doings and external troubles; and further that explanation alone did not suffice, but that the external consequences of internal practices should be allowed to bear back upon the individual economic situations inside the nation, so that pressure came to be felt by each and was not merely talked of as a collective prob-

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lem of no immediate interest to anyone. It was somewhat surprising to find the obvious relationship between internal policy and the dollar crisis strenuously denied by the British Socialists. Very conscious of the dollar-gap, they spoke at the same time of their internal achievement and equilibrium as a sturdy edifice, not to be lightly ventured in a form of European association, as if unconscious that the whole structure is precariously balanced upon external disequilibrium.

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THE DANGER OF SHOCK TACTICS: It is of course a tempting thought that facts must be allowed to persuade where intellectual persuasion fails. And it would seem reasonable to say that while American aid has done an immense service to Europe by returning it to normal conditions of life, its continuation is almost an obstacle to reform. But one should walk warily: prudence is the first virtue of a statesman. The political health of Europe is still very fragile as American leadership seems to have grasped full well.

Let us take the case of France. The lawlessness prevailing during the first years of the Fourth Republic has disappeared. The Administration has lost the arbitrary character of the Gaullist era. Civil rights are now maintained, the parliamentary institution is now working. The American public has never realized how bad the conditions were during the first two years, how little security there was for liberty, property or life, how far the Communists dragged their associates towards a totalitarian regime and how near they were to making France another Czechoslovakia. Or in consequence how great was at one time the appeal of the Gaullist movement. While great and valiant efforts were made to turn the tide, it is only in the last 12 months, under the steady government of M. Queuille, that agitation under all its forms has receded, and that the people have come to believe in normalcy. This is a very recent development and confidence must be given time to harden.

The Prime Minister, M. Queuille, his sturdy helper, M. Devinat, the Minister of Finance, M. Petsche, and other liberal members of the Government, have been mainly concerned to wean the nation away from agitators and find it necessary to remove occasions of agitation sometimes against the indications of their own doctrines. Were France to find herself suddenly bereft of American aid the measures then called for would be such as to swell an enormous wave of agitation. A chance would be given to the Communists, and, conversely, if such a volume of agitation had to be dealt with, a far more brutal government than the present one would be called for. All the ground gained towards democratic law and order would be lost at one stroke. However desirous one may be of correcting economic or social maladjustments, that price is far too high. Nor is it at all certain that the way out which would then be taken would be the liberal one: we might tread the Schachtian path.

The care which is being taken in Washington not to hurry European nations along in the path of such reform as may prove necessary to their ultimate and durable recovery seems to the present writer extremely well-advised. The essential object of American aid is to maintain political liberty in Western Europe. And that object is being achieved with signal success. It is not of major importance, in the short run, that erroneous economic or social policies should be persisted in or developed, even if they are to be regarded as, in the long run, possibly destructive of liberty. For as long as this endures reason can get a hearing. In fact it gets an ever-increasing hearing: everywhere collectivist ideas are receding. A famous general of the Seventeenth Century said: "You should build a bridge of gold to the retiring enemy."

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STRASBOURG: I found the Strasbourg scene very characteristic of the present state of Europe, and quite encouraging. I should like to make four points about the Strasbourg Conference. (1) The hundred and one drawn from twelve European parliaments were quite a remarkable choice: this was a very distinguished assembly.

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(2) There was a common spirit, a sense of responsibility to Europe as a whole, a quite remarkable disinclination to divide either on national or party lines. Nothing could have been more different from, say, a Conference of the United Nations. There were no national delegations presenting a national case; nor did the Socialists of various countries line up together. On the contrary, there was quite noticeable opposition between the Frenchman André Philip, and Mr. Herbert Morrison. In a way, however, the attitude of the British Labor representatives was at variance with the statements above. They did behave as a national delegation in a U.N. Conference, putting a common case, and thus they somewhat altered the picture which would otherwise have been that of a hundred and one well chosen individuals, each trusting to his own judgement.

Before adverting to the special case of the British Labor members, let us stress the third and fourth points about the Strasbourg assembly. (3) It showed itself, in its bulk, convinced that, as M. Paul Reynaud put it: "there is no choice between the status quo and the painful renovation of Europe". (4) But it lacked the final boldness of setting itself up as the renovator: it left to the governments the actual task of moving forward, which they hardly seem in a position to do as most of them appear unable to overcome the obstruction of private interests -- the effective shelving of the Franco-Italian customs union providing a case in point. One of the governments is unique in its national authority; that is the British Labor Government. And this brings us back to the attitude of the Labor delegation.

It worked in fact as a government delegation, which may be due to its having been placed from the outset on the defensive. This European assembly was Mr. Churchill's idea. The Labor Party had remained aloof from the whole campaign leading up to the creation of the institution, and suspected the European movement of "pulling strings"; its members forming a majority or near majority of the assembly, its main executives being very much in evidence. It was unfortunate that the British Conservatives at the very start came out against the Labor candidate for vice-president and put their Labor colleagues in a minority; it was regrettable that none of the six chairmanships of commissions was granted to a Labor member. These are petty things and best avoided. They expressed the assembly's possibly excessive suspicion that the British Labor members were reluctant participants. This was not the case for many of them and Mr. Herbert Morrison gave an earnest of his good will in throwing his whole effort into the building up of a proper procedure, a thankless task he would not have undertaken (as he underlined with good grace) had he not been eager that the institution should endure and flower.

Setting aside minor misunderstandings, one fundamental difference did stand out clearly: the majority of the members felt cooped in within national frontiers affording no real protection, only fit to stifle national effort and to uphold privileged and monopolistic positions, while the British Socialists seemed to think of their frontier as the bulwark of a new order.

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THE TWENTY FIFTH HOUR: I am happy to bring to the reader's notice the most moving and noble book I have met with in many years. It is the work of a thirty-three year old Rumanian, Virgil Georghui and, due to circumstances, has made its first appearance in a French translation under the title La Vingt-Cinquiéme Heure. It depicts the misery of Europeans caught in the war and is essential to the understanding of what happened on the Old Continent. But it goes much further than that: it shows how man is ground down by man-made organizations, by the sinister stupidity of social machines.

It comes as a simple tale of three Rumanians, a writer, a brilliant Jewess and a simple peasant. Things happen to them, things more absurd and cruel than

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Voltaire's imagination devised in Candide. And it is all true or as bad as true. There is no idle literature here: it is a picture drawn with intelligence and compassion, with complete understanding of the evil forces, with true Christian love of fellow man.

In the very first pages, one learns to like the peasant, Ion Moritz. Then the narrative begins. In Fascist Rumania, a silly muddled village policeman, out of impulse, reports Moritz as a Jew. Once he has been taken to a labor camp, the whole machinery cannot work in reverse, each cog is fearful of acknowledging a mistake. Ion after much misery escapes to Hungary with others. There he finds himself suspected of being a Rumanian spy who had adopted subtle means of slipping into Hungary. Then, labelled as a Hungarian worker, he enters Germany in a train which German hands have decorated with Hungarian greetings to the German army. He is ultimately retrieved from forced labor by a crazy major who finds in him an almost unique type of Aryanism and makes him an honored S.S. At every stage, the treatment meted out to him is a result of bureaucratic classification.

Voltaire would have appreciated the irony of these situations. But here there is compassion; there is this repeated stretching out of Moritz's hand: he is no man's enemy, he wants to make friends, but is ever torn away from human beings by whatever machine happens to hold sway. The good are powerless against the machine served by the dull and the fearful, by the blindly angry, by all those who do not, or dare not, stop to look at the persons. Nor is our own machine blameless. Perhaps to us the most tragic part of the book is that which depicts the characters' plight when they have finally escaped to our side. There the Jewess, taxed with being an alien enemy, finally gains access to a Jewish officer who scorns her as a Nazi torturer of Jews. There the writer finds himself imprisoned. There is no opportunity to explain. The responsible are too busy, the cases are too many, it is impossible to wield such masses with attention to individuals. Moreover the regulations do not cover the case.

The author must have gone through exquisite mental torture: it shows through the whole work. When he speaks of brutal camp overseers, of camp chiefs tired of complaints and fearful of responsibilities, this, one knows, is the real thing. Nor does he paint these servants of the nightmare as monsters; they are just hopelessly inadequate to rule absolutely over the lives of fellow men. And who indeed is adequate, failing God's grace? There is not an atom of hatred in the whole book. No hatred of the Germans, no hatred of the Russians. There is nothing but understanding, a wise, almost despairing understanding. And a great warning. I hope the book runs into millions of copies in every language. We can all use its lessons.

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TITO AND FINLAND: One wonders why there is so much talk of Tito who piles the brutality of nationalism and the unpleasantness of self-seeking upon the horrors of Communism. What an ally for the champions of Liberty! It may be a good Machiavellian device to get hold of him but drafting gangsters certainly adds nothing to our moral platform. In the meanwhile next to no attention is given to the admirably courageous stand of the Finns. Since July, 1948, the Fagerholm Government has eliminated the Communists from most of the key positions they had captured. The Government is now facing a series of political strikes and taking a most energetic stand. The trade-unions are taking this opportunity to shake out of their folds the Communist groups. Under the very shadow of the giant, the democratic Finns are fighting for their national independence and for our beliefs. Give me the Finns any day.

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